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Court preserves law to keep Native American children with tribal families

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday preserved the system that gives preference to Native American families in foster care and adoption proceedings of Native children, rejecting a broad attack from some Republican-led states and white families who argued it is based on race.

The court left in place the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act, which was enacted to address concerns that Native children were being separated from their families and, too frequently, placed in non-Native homes.

Tribal leaders have backed the law as a means of preserving their families, traditions and cultures and had warned that a broad ruling against the tribes could have undermined their ability to govern themselves.



Demonstrators stand outside of the U.S. Supreme Court, as the court hears arguments over the Indian Child Welfare Act on Nov. 9, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

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Court preserves law to keep Native American children with tribal families

Continued from Front

The "issues are complicated" Justice Amy Coney Barrett wrote for a seven-justice majority that included the court's three liberals and four of its six conservatives, but the "bottom line is that we reject all of petitioners' challenges to the statute."

Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito dissented, each writing that Congress lacks the authority to interfere with foster care placements and adoptions, typically the province of the states. The decision, Alito wrote, "disserves the rights and interests of these children."

But Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Colorado native who has emerged as a champion of Native rights since joining the court in 2017, wrote in a separate opinion that the decision "safeguards the ability of tribal members to raise their children free from interference by state authorities and other outside parties."

The leaders of tribes involved in the case called the outcome a major victory for tribes and Native children.

"We hope this decision will lay to rest the political attacks aimed at diminishing tribal sovereignty and creating instability throughout

Indian law that have persisted for too long," said a joint statement from Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Morongo Band of Mission Indians Chairman Charles Martin, Oneida Nation Chairman Tehassi Hill and Quinault Indian Nation President Guy Capoeman.

President Joe Biden, whose administration defended the law at the high court, noted that he supported the law 45 years ago when was a Democratic senator from Delaware.

"Our Nation's painful history looms large over today's decision. In the not-so-distant past, Native children were stolen from the arms of the people who loved them," Biden said in a statement.

Congress passed the law in response to the alarming rate at which Native American and Alaska Native children were taken from their homes by public and private agencies.

The law requires states to notify tribes and seek placement with the child's extended family, members of the child's tribe or other Native American families.

Three white families, the state of Texas and a small number of other states claimed the law is unconstitutional under the equal protection clause because

it was based on race. They also contended it puts the interests of tribes ahead of children and improperly allows the federal government too much power over adoptions and foster placements, areas that typically are under state control.

The lead plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case — Chad and Jennifer Brackeen of Fort Worth, Texas — adopted a Native American child after a prolonged legal fight with the Navajo Nation, one of the two largest Native American tribes, based in the Southwest. The Brackeens are trying to adopt the boy's 5-year-old half-sister, known in court papers as Y.R.J., who has lived with them since infancy. The Navajo Nation has opposed that adoption.

At last fall's arguments, several conservative justices expressed concern about at least one aspect of the law that gives preference to Native parents, even if they are of a different tribe than the child they are seeking to adopt or foster. Among them was Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was in the majority Thursday in favor of the tribes. But Kavanaugh injected a cautionary note in a separate opinion focused on the preferences for Native foster and adoptive parents.



Demonstrators stand outside of the U.S. Supreme Court, as the court hears arguments over the Indian Child Welfare Act, Nov. 9, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

"In my view, the equal protection issue is serious," Kavanaugh wrote, commenting that the race of prospective parents and children could be used to reject a foster placement or adoption, "even if the placement is otherwise determined to be in the child's best interests."

The Supreme Court dealt with that issue by determining that neither Texas nor the parents had legal standing to make that argument in this case.

The Brackeens and others can make those arguments in state court proceedings, the justices said.

Matthew McGill, who represented the Brackeens at the Supreme Court, said he would press a racial discrimination claim in state

court. "Our main concern is what today's decision means for the little girl, Y.R.J. — now five years old — who has been a part of the Brackeen family for nearly her whole life. The Court did not address our core claim that ICWA impermissibly discriminates against Native American children and families that wish to adopt them, saying it must be brought in state court," McGill said in a statement. All the children who have been involved in the current case at one point are enrolled or could be enrolled as Navajo, Cherokee, White Earth Band of Ojibwe and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. Some of the adoptions have been finalized while some are still being challenged. □

DeSantis ratchets up feud with California governor Newsom



This combination of photos shows California Gov. Gavin Newsom speaking in Sacramento, Calif., on June 24, 2022, left, and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaking in Sioux Center, Iowa, May 13, 2023, right.

Associated Press

By **STEVE PEOPLES**
AP National Political Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Repub-

lican Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida escalated his feud with California Gov. Gavin

Newsom on Thursday, daring the West Coast Democrat to "stop pussyfooting around" and launch a primary challenge against President Joe Biden.

DeSantis, who announced his presidential campaign late last month, took on Newsom during a news conference in Florida in which he was asked about Newsom's recent comments to Fox News agreeing to a hypothetical debate with DeSantis hosted by Sean Hannity.

"He's got huge problems in his state — I mean, like, huge problems in his state," DeSantis said. "Yet with all those problems, he has a

real serious fixation on the state of Florida. I think it's just bizarre."

DeSantis then turned to the Democrats' 2024 primary election, in which Biden is facing only token opposition.

"You know what? Stop pussyfooting around," DeSantis said. "Are you gonna throw your hat in the ring and challenge Joe? Are you going to get in and do it? Or are you just gonna sit on the sidelines and chirp?" DeSantis' jab comes as he shies away from confrontation with his chief rival in the GOP's White House primary, former President Donald Trump. Newsom has pre-

viously said he would not challenge Biden in 2024 but has taken steps to boost his national profile in recent months.

While several of Trump's Republican rivals have raised concerns about his federal indictment, DeSantis has largely avoided the subject. The governor made only a brief mention of the charges in a weekend speech to the North Carolina GOP during which he focused his censure on the Justice Department and the Biden administration. DeSantis has been much more willing to lean into fights against Democrats and the media. □

Chinese spies breached hundreds of public, private networks, security firm says

By **FRANK BAJAK**
AP Technology Writer

Suspected state-backed Chinese hackers used a security hole in a popular email security appliance to break into the networks of hundreds of public and private sector organizations globally, nearly a third of them government agencies including foreign ministries, the cybersecurity firm Mandiant said Thursday.

"This is the broadest cyber espionage campaign known to be conducted by a China-nexus threat actor since the mass exploitation of Microsoft Exchange in early 2021," Charles Carmakal, Mandiant's chief technical officer, said in a emailed statement. That hack compromised tens of thousands of computers globally.

In a blog post Thursday, Google-owned Mandiant expressed "high confidence" that the group exploiting a software vulnerability in Barracuda Networks' Email Security Gateway was engaged in "espionage activity in support

of the People's Republic of China." It said the activity began as early as October. The hackers sent emails containing malicious file attachments to gain access to targeted organizations' devices and data, Mandiant said. Of those organizations, 55% were from the Americas, 22% from Asia Pacific and 24% from Europe, the Middle East and Africa and they included foreign ministries in Southeast Asia, foreign trade offices and academic organizations in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the company said. Mandiant said the majority impact in the Americas may partially reflect the geography of Barracuda's customer base. Barracuda announced on June 6 that some of its email security appliances had been hacked as early as October, giving the intruders a back door into compromised networks. The hack was so severe the California company recommended fully replacing the appliances.

After discovering it in mid-

May, Barracuda released containment and remediation patches but the hacking group, which Mandiant identifies as UNC4841, altered their malware to try to maintain access, Mandiant said. The group then "countered with high frequency operations targeting a number of victims located in at least 16 different countries."

Word of the breach as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken departs for China this weekend as part of the Biden administration's push to repair deteriorating ties between Washington and Beijing.

His visit had initially been planned for early this year but was postponed indefinitely after the discovery and shutdown of what the U.S. said was a Chinese spy balloon over the United States.

Mandiant said the targeting at both the organizational and individual account levels, focused on issues that are high policy priorities for China, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. It said



Attendees walk past an electronic display showing recent cyberattacks in China at the China Internet Security Conference in Beijing, on Sept. 12, 2017.

Associated Press

the hackers searched for email accounts of people working for governments of political or strategic interest to China at the time they were participating in diplomatic meetings with other countries.

In a emailed statement Thursday, Barracuda said about 5% of its active Email Security Gateway appliances worldwide showed evidence of potential compromise. It said it was providing replacement appliances to affected customers at no cost.

The U.S. government has accused Beijing of being its principal cyberespionage threat, with state-backed Chinese hackers stealing

data from both the private and public sector.

In terms of raw intelligence affecting the U.S., China's largest electronic infiltrations have targeted OPM, Anthem, Equifax and Marriott.

Earlier this year, Microsoft said state-backed Chinese hackers have been targeting U.S. critical infrastructure and could be laying the technical groundwork for the potential disruption of critical communications between the U.S. and Asia during future crises.

China says the U.S. also engages in cyberespionage against it, hacking into computers of its universities and companies. □

Ex-NYC Mayor de Blasio ordered to pay \$475K for misusing public funds

By **JAKE OFFENHARTZ**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio was ordered Thursday to pay \$475,000 by a city ethics board that found he misused public funds on a police security detail during his failed presidential bid.

The hefty fine is the largest ever handed out by New York's Conflicts of Interest Board, capping off a yearslong investigation into the two-term mayor's use of taxpayer dollars to cover the travel costs of NYPD officers who accompanied him on cross-country campaign stops.

Under the ruling, which he has vowed to appeal, de Blasio, a Democrat, will be forced to reimburse the city for \$320,000 spent on the officers' flights, hotels, meals and rental cars during the



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks at the opening of New York's Wollman Rink in Central Park, Nov. 14, 2021.

Associated Press

four-month campaign. He will also have to pay a fine of \$25,000 for each of the security detail's 31 out-of-state trips, amounting to \$155,000.

The order was handed down by the Conflicts of Interest Board Chair, Milton Williams, who found that de Blasio "plainly violated"

the city's prohibition on using public resources to advance a political campaign. De Blasio was advised of this rule prior to his campaign, but "disregarded the Board's advice," Williams wrote in his ruling. In a statement, an attorney for de Blasio, Andrew G. Celli Jr., described the

ruling as "reckless and arbitrary," arguing that recent acts of political violence underscored the security needs of public servants.

"In the wake of the January 6th insurrection, the shootings of Congressmembers Giffords and Scalise, and almost daily threats directed at local leaders around the country, the COIB's (Conflicts of Interest Board's) action — which seeks to saddle elected officials with security costs that the City has properly borne for decades — is dangerous, beyond the scope of their powers, and illegal," he wrote.

De Blasio has faced previous allegations of misusing his security detail. Months before he left office in 2021, a report by the city's Department of Investigation found he treated the officers as a "concierge service," using them to move

his daughter into an apartment and shuttle his son to college.

De Blasio did consult with the Conflicts of Interest Board about the costs of his security prior to announcing his presidential campaign in May 2019. He was told the salaries for NYPD officers would be covered, but that all other costs associated with their travel would not, the board said. Casey accused de Blasio of showing a "deliberate indifference" to the city's ethics board, then blaming his own employees for the error. "It is troubling that during his DOI (Department of Investigation) interview respondent repeatedly attempted to shift blame to his lawyers and campaign staff, while failing to recognize his personal responsibility for following the law," Casey wrote. □

Punishing winds, possible tornadoes inflict damage as storms cross U.S. South

ALBANY, Ga. (AP) — Damaging winds and possible tornadoes toppled trees, damaged buildings and blew cars off a highway Wednesday as powerful storms crossed the South from Texas to Georgia. The National Weather Service issued numerous tornado warnings, mainly in southeast Alabama and southwest Georgia, and cautioned that gusts of hurricane-force winds exceeding 90 mph (145 kph) were possible in parts of northeast Louisiana and central Mississippi. Some areas also were pelted with large hail. Witnesses posted video of tornadoes hitting Abbeville and Eufala in Alabama. In Georgia, authorities in Troup County told WSB-TV that a person was struck by lightning Wednesday afternoon. There was no immediate word on that person's condition.

Tens of thousands of people across both Alabama and Georgia were without power Wednesday night amid the storms, according to each of the state's power providers. At one point, the outages were affecting



This screenshot taken from a video shows a tornado on June 14, 2023, in Blakely, Ga.

close to 50,000 people in Alabama alone.

Forecasters said severe storm threats could persist into Thursday, with the greatest risk across southern Alabama and Georgia into the Florida Panhandle as well as Oklahoma and parts of northern Texas and

southern Kansas. Felecia Bowser, meteorologist in charge for the National Weather Service in Tallahassee, Florida, called the far-reaching inland storm system unprecedented for this time of year. "In June, we're usually gearing up more for tropi-

cal weather," Bowser said. "This type of widespread, aggressive precipitation that we're seeing today usually occurs more so in the spring." Two people escaped unharmed from a home that was destroyed Wednesday as storms raked rural south-

west Georgia, Calhoun County Sheriff Josh Hilton said. He told WALB-TV the home in Quail County Plantation, near the county line with neighboring Early County, was demolished. Video posted on social media showed a large funnel cloud churning on the horizon near the rural city of Blakely, and officials in nearby communities reported downed trees and snapped power lines. Connie Hobbs, the elected commission chairman for neighboring Baker County, said hail stones up to golf-ball size rained down in her yard. Tornado warnings were issued for southwest Georgia's largest city, Albany, and surrounding Dougherty County on Wednesday afternoon. County government spokeswoman Wendy Howell said there had been no reports of significant damage or injuries. "The big concern is flooding," Howell said as rain hammered at windows Wednesday evening. "We're such a flat area, and there's already water standing" on and alongside the roads. □

Michigan bans hairstyle discrimination in workplaces and schools

By **JOEY CAPPELLETTI**
Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The denial of employment or educational opportunities due to discrimination based on natural and protective hairstyles, such as Afros, cornrows or dreadlocks, will be prohibited in Michigan under legislation signed Thursday by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. The new law, known as the Crown Act, will amend the state's civil rights law to ban discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles within employment, housing, education and places of public accommodation. State Sen. Sarah Anthony, who first introduced similar legislation in 2019, said at

Thursday's signing in Lansing that for years, she's heard "the stories of men and women and children who are denied opportunities here in our state," due to hair discrimination. "Let's call it what it is: hair discrimination is nothing more than thinly veiled racial discrimination," said Anthony, the first Black woman to represent Lansing in the state Senate. While previous attempts at passing the Crown Act in Michigan failed in the Republican-led Legislature, the legislation was passed this year with bipartisan support with a 100-7 vote in the state House. Michigan will become the 23rd state to pass a version of the Crown Act, accord-

ing to the governor's office. The U.S. House passed a bill to prohibit hair discrimination last year but it failed to advance in the U.S. Senate. Supporters of the law have pointed to a 2019 study by Dove that showed one in five Black women working in office or sales settings have said they had to alter their natural hair. The study also found Black students are far more likely to be suspended for dress code or hair violations. Marian Scott, a student from Jackson, Michigan, joined lawmakers at Thursday's signing. In 2019, Scott, then an 8-year-old, was told that she could not take school pictures because her red hair extensions violated school policies.

In 2021, a biracial 7-year-old girl in Michigan had her hair cut by a school worker without her parents' permission. The girl's father,

Jimmy Hoffmeyer, filed a \$1 million lawsuit against the school district, alleging racial discrimination and ethnic intimidation. □



Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signs Crown Act legislation on Thursday, June 15, 2023 in Lansing, Mich. that will outlaw race-based hairstyle discrimination in workplaces and schools.
Associated Press

Germany to give \$1.4 billion to Holocaust survivors globally in 2024

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The organization that handles claims on behalf of Jews who suffered under the Nazis said Thursday that Germany has agreed to extend another \$1.4 billion (1.29 billion euros) overall for Holocaust survivors around the globe for the coming year.

The compensation was negotiated with Germany's finance ministry and includes \$888.9 million to provide home care and supportive services for frail and vulnerable Holocaust survivors.

Additionally, increases of \$175 million to symbolic payments of the Hardship Fund Supplemental program have been achieved, impacting more than 128,000 Holocaust survivors globally, according to the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference.

"Every year these negotiations become more and more critical as this last generation of Holocaust survivors age and their needs increase," said Greg Schneider, the Claims Conference's executive vice president.

"Being able to ensure direct payments to survivors in addition to the expansion



The morning light illuminate the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, or the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, June 15, 2023.

sions to the social welfare services is essential in making sure every Holocaust survivor is taken care of for as long as it is required, addressing each individual need," Schneider added. The Hardship Fund Supplemental payment was originally established to be a one-time payment, negotiated during the COVID-19 lockdowns and eventually resulted in three supplemental payments for eligible Holocaust survivors. This year, Germany again agreed to extend the hardship payment, which was set to end in December

2023, through 2027.

The amount for each of the additional years was set at approximately \$1,370 per person for 2024, \$1,425 for 2025, \$1,480 for 2026 and \$1,534 for 2027.

The survivors receiving these payments largely are Russian Jews who weren't in camps or ghettos, and aren't eligible for pension programs, the Claims Conference said.

As children they fled the so-called Einsatzgruppen Nazi mobile killing units charged with murdering entire Jewish communities. More than 1 million Jews were killed

by these units, which operated largely by shooting hundreds and thousands of Jews at a time and burying them in mass pits.

"For those who were able to flee and survive they are some of the poorest in the survivor community; the loss of time, family, property and life cannot be made whole," the group said.

"By expanding payments to these survivors, the German government is acknowledging that this suffering is still being felt deeply, both emotionally and financially," the group said in a statement. "While

symbolic, these payments provide financial relief for many aging Jewish Holocaust survivors living around the world."

With the end of World War II now nearly eight decades ago, all living Holocaust survivors are elderly, and many suffer from numerous medical issues because they were deprived of proper nutrition when they were young.

As the number of survivors dwindles, the Claims Conference also negotiated continuing funding for Holocaust education, which has been extended for two more years and increased each year by \$3.3 million. The newly negotiated funding amounts are approximately \$41.6 million for 2026 and \$45 million for 2027.

Since 1952, the German government has paid more than \$90 billion to individuals for suffering and losses resulting from persecution by the Nazis.

In 2023, the Claims Conference projects it will distribute hundreds of millions in compensation to more than 200,000 survivors in 83 countries and allocated more than \$750 million in grants to more than 300 social service agencies worldwide that provide vital services for Holocaust survivors, such as home care, food and medicine. □

Associated Press

Drug syndicate hid meth in syrup, oil bound for Down Under



In this photo provided by the Australian Federal Police a man is taken into custody in Melbourne, Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

Associated Press

By NICK PERRY
Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A drug syndicate that tried to smuggle tons of methamphetamine from Canada to Australia and New Zealand by hiding it in shipments of maple syrup and canola oil has had its ruse busted, authorities said Thursday.

Authorities from the three nations say they worked together for more than five months to unravel the elaborate scheme that was worth billions of dollars. Authorities in New Zealand and Australia say they've made a dozen arrests and

expect more to come, while Canadian authorities said they are still investigating the case and aren't yet providing all the details. Australian police said they intercepted four separate hauls of meth weighing more than six tons and filed charges against six men. They said that in January, Canadian authorities alerted them that 2,900 liters (766 gallons) of liquid meth had been hidden in 180 bottles of canola oil bound for Australia.

They said Canadian authorities swapped out the meth for a harmless substance and allowed the

shipment to continue. Australian police said that two men then moved what they believed were the drugs to storage locations around the city of Melbourne. Two more shipments came in May and June, and the syndicate was also linked to a December shipment, Australian police said.

In New Zealand, police said the syndicate tried to hide more than three-quarters of a ton of meth in a shipment of maple syrup, the largest such shipment that had been intercepted at New Zealand's border. □

Jesuits expel prominent priest after allegations of sexual, spiritual and psychological abuse

By **NICOLE WINFIELD**

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis' Jesuit religious order said Thursday it has expelled a prominent Slovenian priest from the congregation following allegations of sexual, spiritual and psychological abuses against adult women.

A statement from the Jesuits, obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday, said the Rev. Marko Ivan Rupnik was dismissed from the Jesuit order by decree on June 9 "due to stubborn refusal to observe the vow of obedience."

Rupnik is one of the most celebrated religious artists in the Catholic Church, whose mosaics decorate churches and basilicas around the world, including at the Vatican.

Late last year, the Jesuits acknowledged he had been accused by several women of sexual, spiritual and psychological abuses over a 30-year period. But he had largely escaped punishment, apparently thanks in part to his exalted status in the church and at the Vatican, where even Francis' role in the case came into question.

The Jesuit statement said Rupnik has 30 days to ap-



Pope Francis is flanked by Jesuits' superior general Arturo Sosa Abascal, left, after presiding a mass on March 12, 2022.

peal the expulsion order. He remains a priest, just not a Jesuit priest, and has no authority to celebrate any sacraments publicly. He could eventually join a diocese, but such a process would take years and require a bishop to agree to take him in.

The Rupnik scandal exploded in December when Italian blogs and websites reported that consecrated women had complained for years about abuse by him, only to have their

claims discredited or covered up by Rupnik's superiors. The case posed a problem for the Vatican and the Jesuits because of suspicions that the charismatic priest received preferential treatment by the Holy See, where a Jesuit pope reigns and Jesuit priests are in top positions at the sex abuse office.

After the allegations erupted, the Jesuits reluctantly admitted Rupnik had been declared excommunicated in 2020 for having com-

mitted one of the gravest crimes in church law — using the confessional to absolve a woman with whom he had engaged in sexual activity — but had repented and had the sanction quickly removed.

The next year, Rupnik was accused by nine women of having sexually, psychologically and spiritually abused them in the 1990s at a community he co-founded in Slovenia. Even though the Jesuits recommended a church trial, the

Vatican's sex abuse office refused to waive the statute of limitations and declared the crimes too old to prosecute.

That outcome underscored how the Catholic hierarchy routinely refuses to consider spiritual and sexual abuse of adult women as a crime that must be punished, but rather a mere lapse of priestly chastity that can be forgiven, without considering the trauma it causes victims. After the scandal, the Jesuits invited anyone with other claims against Rupnik to come forward, and 15 people did.

The Jesuits then asked Rupnik to respond, but he refused, according to the statement Thursday.

Associated Press

"Thus, we forced Father Marko Rupnik to change communities and accept a new mission in which we offered him one last chance as a Jesuit to come to terms with his past and to give a clear signal to the many aggrieved people who were testifying against him to enter a path of truth," the statement said. "Faced with Marko Rupnik's repeated refusal to obey this mandate, we were unfortunately left with only one solution: resignation from the Society of Jesus." □

Argentine judge calls for detention of four Lebanese citizens in AMIA bombing probe

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — A federal judge in Argentina has called on Interpol to detain four Lebanese citizens, so they can be questioned for their suspected role in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center that killed 85 people.

"Regarding these individuals, there are well-founded suspicions that they are collaborators or operational agents of the ... armed wing of Hezbollah," judge Daniel Rafecas wrote in a resolution dated June 13 that the Associated Press obtained Thursday.

Argentine prosecutors have long alleged that Iranian officials used the Lebanon-based militant group Hezbollah to carry out the deadly attack. Iran has long denied any involvement in the incident.

Both the United States and Argentina have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Most of the Lebanese citizens now being sought by Rafecas have ties to the porous tri-border region that connects Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay and that the United States has long said is a hub for terrorism financing.

Rafecas has called for the detention of Hussein Mounir Mouzannar, who has a Paraguayan national ID and could be living either in Paraguay or Brazil, as well as Farouk Abdul Hay Omairi, a naturalized Brazilian citizen whose last known address was on the Brazilian side of the tri-border region.

The other two people who are sought for questioning are Ali Hussein Abdallah, a naturalized Brazilian citizen who has both Brazilian and Paraguayan passports, and Abdallah Salman, who is believed to be living in Beirut. □



A plaque with the word in Spanish "Remember" and the names of the victims of the 1994 terrorist attack on the Jewish community center AMIA is placed inside the AMIA compound in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Feb. 8, 2013.

Associated Press

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming

the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Some time after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa



Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Some time later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look,

there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling.

Source: visitaruba.com

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two "hidden" natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok

National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral cliff floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most peo-

ple just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder. □



Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours





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Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



ORANJESTAD - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean.



There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the down town area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle?

The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from

each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center - it is free for all! ☐





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World Sea Turtle Day

ORANJESTAD - On June 16, the United Nations celebrates World Sea Turtle Day to draw attention to the plight of sea turtles and promote conservation efforts.

Seven species of sea turtles are listed as vulnerable or endangered on the world conservation list due to human activity or artificially created environmental conditions. Four of the seven sea turtle species regularly stop by Aruba to rest or lay eggs on the sand. Sea turtles prefer the ideal conditions of Aruba. The hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) are the four sea turtles that go to Aruba.

The Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) is the sea turtle that is most in danger.

The main threats to sea turtles are:

Help and support organizations that protect sea turtles, such as Turtuga Aruba. Donate to Turtuga Aruba or become a volunteer member;

reduce the use of plastic and lower its impact: use reusable products when you go to the beach and avoid single-use plastic. Oxybenzone-containing products are prohibited because they affect coral reefs, the food source for sea turtles;

when boating, act responsibly - Watch out for sea turtles; report the presence of sea turtles on the shores to Turtuga Aruba; If you see a sea turtle on the beach or notice sea turtle tracks on the beach, contact Turtuga Aruba at 592-9393. Do not disturb or touch sea turtles, and do not photograph with a flash as this disorients them. Turtuga Aruba monitors sea turtle activity near Aruba and shares this data with the Department of nature and Environment

(DNM); if you snorkel or dive and want to photograph sea turtles, do so from a safe distance and do not approach the sea turtles, this is against the law;

choose sustainable seafood farmed sustainably and in compliance with the law; protect sea turtles and their habitat and teach others about sea turtles and their value. Poaching: Illegal killing of sea turtles for their meat, eggs, or shells for consumption or illicit sale;

Loss of Habitat: Sand beaches are necessary for sea turtles to lay their eggs because they make it simpler for the hatchlings to emerge and move around. Coastal development destroy their habitat. Newborn sea turtles are confused by the lights from these nearby structures, which makes them crawl away from the beach rather than toward it, which can be fatal.

Accidental Catch (by-catch): Sea turtles often become entangled in fish-



ing nets or fish traps set to catch fish.

Plastic pollution: Sea turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, their primary food source. It can be fatal since it obstructs the digestive tract.

Climate change: Sea levels are rising due to climate change, flooding beach-side nests. Sea surface temperatures also alter by climate change, which changes the sex of young sea turtles and causes an imbalance.

What can we do to help protect sea turtles?
Help and support organizations that protect sea turtles, such as Turtuga Aruba. Donate to Turtuga Aruba or become a volunteer member;

reduce the use of plastic and lower its impact: use reusable products when you go to the beach and avoid single-use plastic. Oxybenzone-containing products are prohibited because they affect coral reefs, the food source for

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if you snorkel or dive and want to photograph sea turtles, do so from a safe distance and do not approach the sea turtles, this is against the law;

choose sustainable seafood farmed sustainably and in compliance with the law; protect sea turtles and their habitat and teach others about sea turtles and their value. □



Part 2

Aruba's Paleo lithic hunters and gatherers

Nothing stood in their path, as we have mentioned in our first episode

It would be yesterday if we ask Pachamama in terms of her existence so to speak, since the last ice age melt down took place. However this was what is believed to have opened new hunting territory and navigable waters for the early archaic hunter, explorer and exploiter.

Endurance and intrepidity had found the means of a pretty good life, however very mobile and on a constant move when it was time to pick up camp. But if food and resource were in abundance the urge to move became less necessary. In other words they were a semi nomadic people of convenience that exploited the available goods and supply in a specific area or zone. In this aspect the island must have been very attractive to come back after one season or more, discovering the plenty the island had to offer in those early days. It must have provided also a peaceful existence



and plenty of leisure time, with medium and small game, marine animals, and batholite boulders that offer great shelter but most important there were fresh water reservoirs that offered yearlong sustainable clean and fresh water supplies.

Early tool technology

Technological similarities between the stone tools



elaboration of North America Paleo-Natives and of their South American cousins is an evident beyond any reasonable doubt and unlikely that simple bifacial worked, stone projectile points would have been invented independently during the same period in time, on both continents. It is inconceivable that this would have happened. Rather than representing cultures divergent on a major time scale, the early Paleo-Indian lithic industries in South America are fairly closely and obviously tied to North American antecedents. Other specialized artifacts of the early industries are also nearly identical, such as snub-nosed end scrapers, thumbnail scrapers, gravers, notched tools, bifacial knife-scrapers, and flake scrapers with retouch from alternate sides.

Artifacts made out of local stone, shells coral and bones were found in shell maidens, burials while rock art sites scattered on the

island composes the majority of what can be considered scarce teachings for generations, evidence that constitutes the record for this time in human history. Just as in other places. Stones and rocks where in abundance everywhere on the island. Each different lithic material was applied according to their strength and conditions. Some of them where transformed into weights for fishing nets, sling shots, boleadoras, color pigments, arrow heads, axes and scrapers among other. Local bifacial series present some common features, but are chiefly characterized by range in diversity of blank types, whereas the heavy-duty component presents in the material to fabricate bifacial axes that wherelimited to specific island quarries.

The blueish original color Pic 2, where this bifacial axe is chipped recently, contrasts the lighter color shown on the entire exterior represents thousands

of years exposed to the elements, since the time it was dropped or left there on the floor obtaining its patina.

Interpreting century's old information recollected with the goal of study and analyzes, is why lithic utensils, pollen, animal bones and burial grounds are excavated is all about. In various places on the island archaic hunters activities was present. However it takes a trained eye to read the earth's surface for clues. Finding evidence to support the theory that the Paleolithic man had to dedicate himself and master various tasks and technics in order to conquer his environment is essential.

We trust that as scientific disciplines applied technologies become more and more accurate as well as accessible new findings will reveal an unimaginable window of discoveries. Separating the did's and did nots during the Paleo hunters travels in the Pan Caribbean area and more precisely Aruba.

Now it is to imagine nomadic family groups, bands and clans of approximately 30 individuals, arriving in dub out canoes with animals and vegetation that was not here before practicing and primitive agro culture. Also prime materials were imported in the form of chert since it was not viable on the island. Family groups of ages between 47 for those who have seen better day to a new born. Excavation production can tells us a lot regarding health and believes height, what they ate, etc. in what conditions they must had survived locally. One of these excavated sites is Malmok.□

Source; Island Insight Column by Etnia Nativa.



Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S.



or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also

served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-

American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks in-

clude ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun.

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 38 Stone unit
- 1 Roulette rounds
- 6 Reuben layer
- 11 Wine grape
- 12 Decimal part
- 13 Prologue
- 14 Texas player
- 15 Bleachers cry
- 16 Letter before omega
- 18 In what way
- 19 Pigged out
- 20 Stock holder
- 21 Cain raiser
- 22 Survived
- 24 Ran, as color
- 25 Hamlet's pal
- 27 Flat-bottomed boat
- 29 Beach footwear
- 32 Golf goal
- 33 Clinic cost
- 34 "My word!"
- 35 Tiny worker
- 36 Pharaoh's symbol
- 37 Stroller user

H	O	P	E	S		A	C	H	E	D
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A	D	I	E	U		L	E	N	I	N
G	E	E	S	E		T	W	I	N	S

Yesterday's answer

DOWN

- 1 Helix shape
- 2 Target at a party
- 3 Over little time
- 4 Neither follower
- 5 Plug
- 6 Laundry problem
- 7 Director Anderson
- 8 Over much time
- 9 Tried hard
- 10 Exhibited
- 17 Calms down
- 23 Pull
- 24 Book jacket bit
- 26 Bad thing to live in
- 27 Moved apart
- 28 Second-largest nation
- 30 Elroy Jetson's dad
- 31 Hunting dog
- 33 Trio of myth
- 39 Great service
- 41 Fragrant neckwear

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19				20				21	
22			23	.		24	.		.
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32				33				34	.
35				36				37	
38			39		40	41			
42					43				
44					45				

6-16

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

W Z Z E V Y E W N G L D S Z N G Q B I Z N

G P O G I M G L S G , F L E F U Z D Z B

D R F D S Z N G Q B I Z N X F E

V Y E W N G L D . — H M U U I Z W G I Q

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: KNOWING WHAT'S RIGHT DOESN'T MEAN MUCH UNLESS YOU DO WHAT'S RIGHT. — TEDDY ROOSEVELT

Millennial Money: How to use ChatGPT to plan your next trip

By SAM KEMMIS
of NerdWallet

Planning travel can be a daunting maze. Guidebooks, by their nature, send all readers to the same destinations. And web searches can yield an unhelpful mess of content.

Yet some tech-savvy travelers are finding success using artificial intelligence chatbots like ChatGPT and Bard to inspire and plan their vacations, treating these services like free, on-demand travel agents.

"I liked the idea of ChatGPT because it gives you a very clear list," says Alpa Patel, an avid traveler based out of New York City.

Patel has been planning a family trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, for the summer. After getting frustrated with the cookie-cutter travel websites served up by Google, she had an idea: Why not ask ChatGPT for



People pass through Salt Lake City International Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

some advice?

"I started with the best places to stay and it gave me a list of neighborhoods, along with the best hotels. I actually picked my hotel through that list," Patel says.

SET YOUR PREFERENCES

Although Patel enjoyed the simplicity of these responses, she quickly found another reason why AI chat-

bots like ChatGPT can be useful for travel planning: customization.

Google was giving her endless recommendations for the Scottish Highlands, but Patel's younger son gets carsick, so she didn't think it would be feasible for him to spend hours in a car to get there. She found ChatGPT was able to give her reasonable alternatives. □

Theme parks bounced back in 2022 from pandemic lows



In this Jan. 22, 2015 file photo, visitors walk toward the Sleeping Beauty's Castle in the background at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif.

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Last year marked a return to normal for the theme park industry around the world with operators reporting revenues, and in some cases attendance, at par or above pre-pandemic levels, according to a new report. Globally, the theme park industry hit a peak in 2019, the year before the spread of the COVID-19 virus forced many parks and attractions to shut down temporarily and then re-open with restrictions on attendance. Many operators focused on improving visitor experiences through adapting app-based technologies and that paid off with revenues in 2022 that surpassed 2019 levels, even if attendance had not bounced back in the same way, according to the report released Wednesday by the Themed Entertainment Association and AE-COM, the design and engineering firm. □

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24/7

'Smartphones' for sharks: Scientists upgrade sensors to keep track of Cape Cod's white sharks

By MARK PRATT
Associated Press

Scientists monitoring the white shark population in the waters off Massachusetts' Cape Cod are attaching improved sensors, including cameras, to the predators to help scientists keep track of their whereabouts and to keep beachgoers informed and safe, researchers said Tuesday.

The program comes just as tourists are filling up hotels and rental properties on the Cape for the summer and white sharks are returning in greater numbers to feed on the region's abundant seals.

Interactions between white sharks and humans are rare. But the risk is still there. There have been five in Massachusetts since 2012 three of them classified as bites, one of which was fatal, said Greg Skomal, the state Division of Marine Fisheries shark expert. "So as a result, we've intensified our research off the Cape to study various aspects of white shark behavior," Skomal said.

For more than a decade, the fisheries division and the nonprofit Atlantic White Shark Conservancy have tagged about 300 sharks with acoustic sensors that emit a high-frequency sound to an array of receivers along the coast. Public



In this May 22, 2019, file photo, a shark warning warns beachgoers at Lecount Hollow Beach in Wellfleet, Mass.

Associated Press

safety officials and lifeguards are notified when a shark swims within range of an acoustic receiver.

This year, researchers are attaching more camera sensors to the predators.

They capture more than just video. The sensors can detect a shark's depth, direction, surrounding water temperature and whether it's accelerating or slowing down. The technology allows scientists to monitor the sharks on a second-by-second basis, Skomal said. Megan Winton, a staff scientist at the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, calls it giving smartphones to sharks. "They're outfitted with an incredible array of sensors that tell us about the animal's movements and their environment," she said, adding that it's

"essentially just riding on the back of a white shark." The information is downloaded to a free app available to the public to reduce encounters and promote safety.

One video captured by a camera tag clamped to a shark's dorsal fin shows the predator moving into water about 4 feet (1.2 meters) deep close to shore

to go after a seal, stirring up a storm of sand from the bottom. The seal ultimately escaped.

Sharks are patient hunters. "They slowly patrol the shoreline very methodically until they essentially have a chance to make their move," Winton said. The technology also has provided insight into how curious sharks are. They have been seen coming to the surface to nibble a lobster buoy or check out a bird or some other piece of flotsam, she said.

Researchers also have started using drones to help spot sharks from above, a method that has been used in other parts of the world, including Australia, Skomal said. □

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Downtown

Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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Chris Hemsworth returns in 'Extraction 2,' a gun-for-hire who pulls you completely in

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

Tyler Rake was clinically dead when we last saw him at the end of "Extraction," tumbling over a bridge in Bangladesh with a fatal, burbling bullet wound to his neck. But death is no match for Netflix.

Chris Hemsworth returns as the sad-sack, gun-for-hire Rake in "Extraction 2" and you'll thank the giant streamer for such a nifty bit of resurrection because this franchise is pure cinematic adrenalin.

The new movie comes two years after a surprisingly good first installment, which saw Rake intervene in a feud between two rival drug dealers, survive numerous double-crosses, ask things like "How many hostiles onsite?" and lob an inexhaustible number of grenades.

How he survived it all stuns even his friends. Emerging from a coma in "Extraction 2," he is stashed in a remote chalet in Gmunden, Austria, and told to chill out learn to knit, go on hikes, try to reach mindfulness. "Enjoy retirement," he is told. If he did there would be no



This image released by Netflix shows Chris Hemsworth in a scene from "Extraction 2."

Associated Press

"Extraction 2."

Inevitably, a new extraction job comes along, so cue the getting-in-shape montage of Hemsworth doing pushups in the snow, splitting firewood, pushing a sled filled with rocks and some light ax throwing. Somehow, the "Extraction" movies lean into all the cliches but they don't feel old.

Hemsworth is re-joined here by Marvel Comic Universe-screenwriter Joe Russo and

stunt-specialist-turned-director Sam Hargrave, but their ace-in-the-hole is their cinematographers, who create impossibly long single takes of complicated fighting or driving scenes that put the viewer directly into the action like few other thrillers.

Last time it was Newton Thomas Sigel. This time, Greg Baldi stages a breathless rescue from inside the winding tunnels of a brutal Georgian prison, com-

plete with a full riot, a flaming police shield used as a weapon, a car chase with motorcycles and rockets, a race through a factory and then onto a train moving 40 mph, where helicopters are shot down and there's more hand-to-hand combat aboard. It's a 20-minute tour-de-force the kind of sequence that brings you up from your seat to applaud, even if you're on your couch. And there's more than an hour to go.

"Extraction 2" seems to have more money this time around. I'm sure they'd like to apologize for using a lot of it to trash downtown Vienna but unlike other action franchises, it doesn't waste it on pretty excursions to Paris museums or five-star Tokyo hotels.

The strength of these movies has always been being down in the mud, streets and dirt, with the sound of spent cartridges pinging off concrete. These characters sweat and they bruise, even if many look fabulous in sunglasses.

The baddies here are similar to the first installment a pair of powerful, scarred brothers who run heroin and guns in Georgia and are quiet-talking psychopaths, the kind who whisper a metaphor and then plunge a rake into your throat.

We learn a bit more about Rake and even meet members of his extended family, but he remains a one-note emotionally suppressed man. One knock on the franchise is that it hasn't been able to take advantage of Hemsworth's humor, like Marvel has done with his Thor. □

The Beatles are releasing their 'last' record. AI helped make it possible

By **SYLVIA HUI and MARIA SHERMAN**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Artificial intelligence has been used to extract John Lennon's voice from an old demo to create "the last Beatles record," decades after the band broke up, Paul McCartney said Tuesday.

McCartney, 80, told the BBC that the technology was used to separate the Beatles' voices from background sounds during the making of director Peter Jackson's 2021 documentary series, "The Beatles: Get Back." The "new" song is set to be released later this year, he said.

Jackson was "able to extract John's voice from a ropey little bit of cassette

and a piano," McCartney told BBC radio. "He could separate them with AI, he'd tell the machine 'That's a

voice, this is a guitar, lose the guitar'."

"So when we came to make what will be the last



Paul McCartney and Nancy Shevell pose for photographers upon arrival for the premiere of the film 'If These Walls Could Sing' in London, Monday, Dec. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

Beatles record, it was a demo that John had that we worked on," he added. "We were able to take John's voice and get it pure through this AI so then we could mix the record as you would do. It gives you some sort of leeway."

McCartney didn't identify the name of the demo, but the BBC and others said it was likely to be an unfinished 1978 love song by Lennon called "Now and Then." The demo was included on a cassette labeled "For Paul" that McCartney had received from Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, the BBC reported.

McCartney described AI technology as "kind of scary but exciting," adding: "We will just have to

see where that leads."

The same technology enabled McCartney to "duet" virtually with Lennon, who was murdered in 1980, on "I've Got a Feeling" last year at Glastonbury Festival.

Holly Herndon, a multidisciplinary artist with a doctorate in composition from Stanford University, used nascent AI machine technology on her last album, 2019's "Proto," and developed Holly+, an online protocol that allows the public to upload tracks to be reinterpreted and performed by a deepfake version of her voice. She theorizes that the Beatles' recording was likely created using a process called "source separation." □

Diversity study finds percentage of Black MLB players at another record low

By AARON BEARD
AP Sports Writer

An annual study reviewing diversity hiring for Major League Baseball reported a record low of Black players on opening day rosters for the second straight year.

Thursday's report card from The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at Central Florida issued an overall grade of C-plus, with a B for racial hiring and a C for gender hiring. The report examined a range of positions at MLB's headquarters and within franchises using data collected by the league from March shortly before the start of the 2023 season.

Those grades were similar to the previous year, when the league had a B-minus overall, a B for race and a C-plus for gender.

But the study found Black players represented just 6.2% of players on opening day rosters, down from last year's previous record low of 7.2%. Both figures are the lowest recorded in the study since it began in 1991, when 18% of MLB players were Black.

TIDES director and lead

study author Richard Lapchick noted the decline comes despite MLB's implementation of numerous programs to increase Black youth participation in the U.S. that could ultimately move the numbers down the line.

"I think the trend might continue another year or two until all the programs they've put in place have that type of impact," Lapchick said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"It's hard to say. I think eventually it's going to turn around in the direction that baseball wants. Will it ever get back to where it was? I'd be surprised if it does." MLB didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about the report Thursday afternoon.

The study's findings come after last year's World Series marked the first time there were no U.S.-born Black players since 1950, shortly after Jackie Robinson broke the MLB color barrier. "I think that if it's possible that the player number is going to be reversed, then it's going to happen because of the efforts (MLB is) putting into it," Lapchick



The Texas Rangers stand for the playing of the national anthem before an opening day baseball game against the Philadelphia Phillies on March 30, 2023, in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press

said. "But there are other factors at play. If you're a 13-year-old Black kid growing up and you look at Black role models in other sports and in baseball, you've got to believe your best chance is not in baseball."

Still, there are indications of potential improvement. Four of the first five players picked in last summer's amateur draft were Black for the first time ever. Those four, and more than 300 MLB players, had participated in diversity initiatives such as the MLB Youth Academy, DREAM Series and the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) pro-

gram.

MLB also has pledged \$150 million in a 10-year partnership with the Players Alliance. That nonprofit organization of current and former players works to increase Black involvement at all levels.

The study awarded MLB with an A-plus for diversity initiatives, and not all are focused solely on players. It referenced the newly created MLB University program, a 10-month career-development course to prepare diverse candidates for front office or on-field roles. The study also highlighted the Diversity Pipeline Program to grow

the pool of qualified women and others for operations and on-field roles.

Another example: the league has conducted in-person and virtual recruiting efforts with students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) as outreach for summer internships, the study reported. It's all part of what Lapchick described as baseball "putting out a maximum effort" in diversity efforts.

TIDES issues annual report cards on racial- and gender-hiring practices in professional leagues and for college sports. Thursday's MLB release is the first of the 2023 season reports. □

French veteran Gasquet stuns top-seeded Tsitsipas in Stuttgart for 600th win



France's Richard Gasquet returns the ball to Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas during their round of sixteen tennis match at the ATP tennis tournament in Stuttgart, Germany, Thursday, June 15, 2023.

Associated Press

STUTTGART, Germany (AP) — French veteran Richard Gasquet prevailed on his

fifth match point to upset top-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (8), 2-6, 7-5 at the

Stuttgart Open for his 600th ATP tour win on Thursday.

"It's incredible to achieve it," Gasquet said. "I've been 20 years on the tour and I took it to this level in matches. It's big for me, so I'm very happy with with this number. Of course, I will try to win some more."

Gasquet, who will turn 37 on Sunday, made a slow start as Tsitsipas won the first three games but he leveled for 3-3, then won the first set in the tiebreaker. Tsitsipas, who was playing his first grass-court match of 2023, fended off four match points — the first with his 19th ace — before Gasquet finally delivered on the fifth.

"I had five match points. It was important for me to win this game. You never know what can happen in a tiebreak," Gasquet said. "So yeah, I was very, very happy."

The 55th-ranked Gasquet, who defeated American qualifier Christopher Eubanks in the first round, next faces home favorite Jan-Lennard Struff in Friday's quarterfinals.

"He's a good guy, a good friend, he's very good. It's really a tough match for me, but I have nothing to lose and I'll try my best to win," Gasquet said of playing Struff, against whom he has a 2-0 record.

Struff defeated fifth-seed-

ed American Tommy Paul 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) earlier Thursday. The German player hit 21 aces but could only break once, with Paul saving six of the seven break points he faced.

Taylor Fritz held serve throughout as he started his grass-court season by beating Aslan Karatsev 7-6 (4), 6-3 to reach the quarterfinals.

Fritz had to save set point at 5-4 down in the first set, which later went to a tiebreaker where Fritz raced into a 5-2 lead before sealing the set. Fritz broke Karatsev for the first time at 3-2 in the second set to put himself on course for the win. □

Fowler, Schauffele break U.S. Open record with 62s

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rickie Fowler can always say he was the first to shoot 62 in the U.S. Open.

But only by about 15 minutes.

Xander Schauffele soon matched him on the North course at Los Angeles Country Club with an 8-under 62 of his own, making Thursday a most extraordinary day for scoring in the major known as the toughest test in golf.

The tough part was keeping track of their birdies.

"It's not really what you expect playing a U.S. Open," Schauffele said. "But monkey see, monkey do. Was just chasing Rickie up the leaderboard. Glad he was just in front me."

Fowler was the first, a round so remarkable it included two bogeys when he missed the green on the 254-yard 11th and missed the fairway on the 17th on his front nine. But starting with a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th, he ran off four straight birdies. The streak ended on the par-3 fourth when he came 2 inches away from holing a long bunker shot.

He set the record with a two-putt from just under 60 feet on the par-5 ninth. That's also when he noticed the leaderboard.

"I knew where I was at," Fowler said. "I would say from the middle of the round up until the ninth green, our last hole, I didn't really know or see any scores. And then I saw that Xander was at 7 (under) at that point, and I'm not sure if he even knew where I was or anything."

"But it was kind of cool if he did to see he kind of latched on and we were taking off a bit."

Schauffele was two groups behind and never too far away. He lost one birdie chance on the short par-4 sixth by trying to drive the green, but then picked up a rare birdie on the 258-yard seventh hole with what he called a "toma-hawk 4-iron" to 5 feet.

"That's pretty much all I have in my body," Schauffele



Rickie Fowler hits from the fairway on the second hole during the first round of the U.S. Open golf tournament at Los Angeles Country Club on Thursday, June 15, 2023, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

said. He got up-and-down from just short of the green on the par-5 eighth, and then had a birdie chance from just inside 30 feet that would have topped Fowler and send him into the major championship record book alone. He left it short and settled for a 62.

They now share the major championship record with Branden Grace, who had a 62 in the third round at Royal Birkdale in the 2017 British Open.

Their record day came on the 50-year anniversary of Johnny Miller posting the first 63 in U.S. Open history. Since then, five players have shot 63 in a U.S. Open, most recently Tommy Fleetwood in 2018 at Shinnecock Hills.

Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf each shot 63 in the opening round at Baltusrol in the 1980 U.S. Open, which Nicklaus went on to win.

The conditions were prime for scoring — overcast, mild with barely any wind.

Condensation in the morning felt like a like mist, and it kept the greens receptive. Even so, the next best score from the morning wave was a 3-under 67 by a group that included Scottie Scheffler and Bryson DeChambeau.

The low scoring was sure to raise questions about LACC, a century-old club hosting a major championship for the first time. Schauffele wasn't interested in that.

"My job is just to play. I try not to speculate too much," he said. "I'm going to take what the course can give me, and today it gave me a low one."

He also wasn't expecting this to continue. The USGA's idea of a good test is something around par, and there wasn't much that could be done against increasing depth of talent in golf and pristine weather conditions.

"It's just Thursday. It's literally just the first day of a tournament. It's a good start," Schauffele said. "You just

wait until this place firms up. It's going to be nasty." It already proved to be just that for some players. Justin Rose, the Pebble Beach winner this year who is returning to good form, opened with a 76. Justin Thomas, Jason Day and Tommy Fleetwood could only manage 73.

PGA champion Brooks Koepka was among the late starters and was 3 over through his first five holes. Masters champion Jon Rahm, playing alongside Schauffele, opened with a 69. That's typically a solid start in the U.S. Open. This one left him seven shots behind.

Schauffele tends to play his best in the U.S. Open — five top 10s in his six appearances, and he has been among the elite on the PGA Tour the last several years even without winning a major.

Fowler is different. He once finished in the top 5 at all four majors in 2014. But a recent slump made a chal-

lenge just to get in them. He was the first alternate last year at Brookline and had to go home without hitting a shot.

But he went back to instructor Butch Harmon in September and has played well enough to get back into the top 50 in the world after being in danger of falling out of the top 200 a year ago.

And there he was at a major, putting his name in the record book for all the right reasons.

"It's definitely been long and tough — a lot longer being in that situation than you'd ever want to," Fowler said. "But it makes it so worth it having gone through that and being back where we are now."

But even he offered a degree of caution for the rest of the week.

"There's still plenty of golf to be played. It's going to be tough tomorrow afternoon," he said. "But at least got out of the gate and we're off to a good start." □